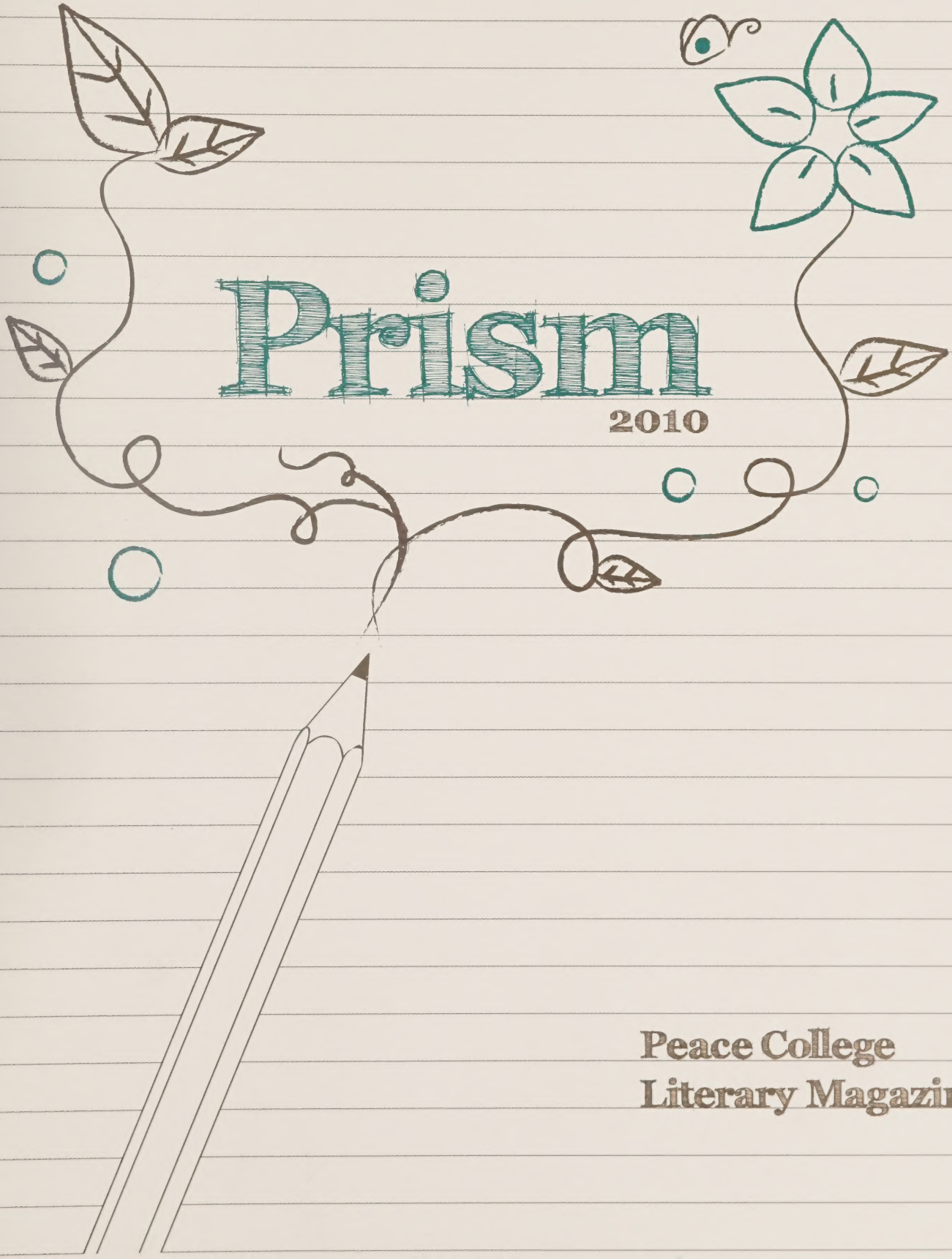

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Editors:

Abry Freeman
Alexandra Olney
Ana Teresa Galizes
Jessica Dixon

Faculty Advisor
Dr. Charles Duncan

Designed By:

Sarah K. Cosby
Megan Goodson
Heather Louise Finch
Ann Kim
Alysia McLaurin
Erika Shingleton
Morgan Weathington

Faculty Advisor
Denielle Emans

Table of Contents

4 **My Love** *by Meagan Hightower*

4 **Like a Wizard** *by Juanette Williams*

5 **Looking at Him** *by Ana Teresa Galizes*

5 **The Lion and the Lamb** *by Melissa Williams*

6 **Seraphim and Satan's Men** *by Jessica Dixon*

8 **In Tin** *by Megan Langlois*

8 **Flowers** *by Meagan Hightower*

9 **Running** *by Megan Langlois*

9 **From Me to You** *by Juanette Williams*

10 **Forget the Title Remember the Taste** *by Melissa Williams*

11 **Depraved Heart** *by Megan Langlois*

11 **Sicklickle/Cyclical** *by Jessica Dixon*

12 **Full Moon** *by Anna Tyson*

13 **Sinfully Delicious** *by Anna Tyson*

14 **To Fly** *by Megan Langlois*

15 **Club Life** *by Felicia Hilton*

15 **Cold Front** *by Robin Story*

16 **Living Together** *by Jessica Dixon*

16 **The Calling of the Hearts Desires** *by Felicia Hilton*

17 **Midnight Ponderings** *by Rachel House*

18 **Demon's Seal** *by Megan Langlois*

18 **Deeper Waters** *by Megan Langlois*

19 **Other Side of the World** *by Megan Langlois*

20 **Sleepless Cities** *by Anna Tyson*

20 **Craving More** *by Abry Freeman*

21 **Creative Cacophony of Evasive Sleep** *by Ana Teresa Galizes*

22 **Disturbia** *by Anna Tyson*

23 **Through the Rain** *by Yuliana Navarro*

23 **A Book** *by Meagan Hightower*

24 **Surprise! It's Over!** *by Jessica Dixon*

24 **Thought of You** *by Sonisa Thapa*

25 **Sheets** *by Alexandra Olney*

25 **Who are We?** *by Juanette Williams*

26 **Kathryn's Crash** *by Melissa Williams*

27 **White Sails, Red Crosses** *by Ana Teresa Galizes*

28 **Mountains in the Sky** *by Megan Langlois*

28 **Awfully Bad Poetry** *by Ariel Wortham*

29 **Mamá, No Llores** (Mama, Don't Cry for Me) *by Anna Tyson*

30 **Women in Wounded Land** *by Al-Mounawara Yaya*

31 **Lost Love** *by Anonymous*

32 **The Silent Goodbye** *by Maria Leonar Lopez*

34 **7 Ways of Looking at a Cherry Blossom** *by Jessica Dixon*

35 **Mystery** *by Juanette Williams*

36 **Nostalgia** *by Al-Mounawara Yaya*

37 **Stage Fright** *by Jessica Dixon*

38 **The Hard Life on an Actor** *by Robin Story*

39 **Untitled** *by Gay Brinkley*

40 **Untitled** *by Gay Brinkley*

My Love

by Meagan Hightower

Runs swiftly like whitewater rapids.
Your words
Are candy to my ears, fluttering my heartstrings
So tenderly.
I adore you,
Yet you don't feel
The same;
This enflamed longing
Wastes away to ashes on the furnace.
Why do I love you?
It hurts…
It pains me
To see you so happy with someone else.
I can never hold back my feelings for you;
You should know that by now.
It is unreasonable to expect anything different
In our own little world.

Like a Wizard

by Juanette Williams

A caress touch that you have!
Smoothly,
You massage my body
From head to toe.
Gently,
Stirring up my sensitive hormones.
What must I do? I thought to myself.
Yet, the juices start to flow.
Tempting to take control, I ask,
"What are you doing?"
Well knowing,
But playing hard to get,
Finally,
Entering in
To relax your muscle.
Tight and warm as expected.
Neither,
Unhesitating.
Here it comes—
The Big-Bang Theory!

Looking at Him

by Ana Teresa Galizes

He doesn't try to hide
The faint smell of Tobacco
In his long, cherubic locks.

To earn a living,
He lifts boxes and
Nail boards, yet
He has a watchmaker's hands.

He is a lover of—
Philosophy,
Science,
And Music.

Forced to be an adult
As a child,
His smile never reaches his eyes.

This Scandinavian could be
A Viking, Marauder,
Pirate or King.

Barely-there freckles
Are complemented by
Delicate, pink lips.

I have been looking at him
For seven years, yet
I still blush.

The Lion and the Lamb

by Melissa Williams

Wishing love could come and go as easily as you,
As pink flesh turns to blue…and hearts are never
Broken as much as words left unspoken.

Dad, home was found that summer. Your bed became
The altar. Prayers said meant prescriptions read.
Too wrong to prolong a life lived on.

Judged are my actions to the reactions of
A Dad, a Disease, a Heart, and Passion.

Winter's weather can't touch the cold I felt in you
As your last breath buried me, too. My hero—
You never knew how my life sacrificed happiness, too.

And if this daughter could respond to her hero's song,
She'd dance on and on to the deadly beat that
Used to calm where only chaos belonged.

Seeing you surrounded by family and friends
Only reminds me misery began, and as fast as I ran,
Quicksand would be the demand as my life tricked
The lion into caring for the lamb.

Seraphim and Satan's Men

by Jessica Dixon

"How do I know you're real?"

I didn't turn to face the man on the bed. I knew what he looked like—dark suit, expensive tie, shined shoes, slicked back hair, dark eyes, manicured hands. I'd seen him more times than I'd seen anyone else in three months. When he sighed, I could even see that, though my eyes were watching squirrels scurry about on the lawn. I also knew what he would say:

"Lilah, we've been over this before. I am just as real as the bed I'm sitting on, the bed you sleep in every night."

"You say that, but how do I know?"

I shifted in the straight-back chair made of some very uncomfortable wood. I once told him it looked like an electric chair, and it seemed to me that when I said this his eyes had been empty electrical sockets. That was my first day in this room, the first day that I had begun to question him. I tilted just so, allowing myself to see him reflected in the window's glass, and waited for an answer.

"Don't you remember how we met, Lilah?"

"Yes. In the park."

"Under the weeping willow by the pond."

"The nurses told me I was allowed to sit there as long as I didn't go anywhere else. And I could most certainly not go down to the pond."

"That's correct. You have memories of me, which makes me real."

"Does it? I've never heard anyone else talk about you. I've never even seen you in the community room. Only in here. Usually sitting right where you are now."

I stood, my legs sticking to the uncomfortable wood just a little. I looked at him for just a moment before deciding to walk to the bed and sit beside him. He appeared to go out of focus as I sat, but then he came back. I blinked, my head beginning to ache with confusion.

"That's because I spend most of the day in my office across town, Lilah. You know that you're the only one I visit here."

"Why?"

"You're… Special."

He looked right in my eyes, and I felt almost certain that there were no eyes in his face, but I could've been mistaken. I've been mistaken many times before. I glanced at the bedside table.

The clock read 12:50 pm. I would have to take the little pink candies again in ten minutes. The bottle, like that for those Mini M&Ms that everyone loved in the late 90s, sat beside the clock, waiting for me. I didn't want to take them . But I would. Not because everyone else told me to, but because he had told me to on day one.

"They don't say your name."

"They call me—"

"That's not your name. Your name is Ayden. That's what you told me."

"Because you wouldn't talk to me, otherwise."

"YOU AREN'T A DOCTOR!"

"Lilah, I know you don't like it, but I am. In here with you, I am your friend. I come to help. But if you keep talking about how you don't know if I exist, then things are going to change around here. You might have to leave. I don't want that to happen."

"What do you care? You should just tell me the truth so I can forget about you."

"I care because I am real. I care because I want to help you. I don't want someone else taking care of you."

I let my eyes meet his, although I did not want to see the sockets again. My head pounded, too much thinking always did that. Too much thinking about him at least. I felt hot tears on my cheeks.

"Tell me again about how you found out about me."

"I was on business at this very place, and I saw you sitting in the library upstairs. The nurses told me it was your first day, and they let you into the library because it was the only place that seemed to calm you down. I asked if I could have your chart. I spent the next week reading about you. Two months later they agreed to give me your case. And the next day, I met you by the pond."

"Why me?"

"I told you, you're special."

"I want you to be real."

He smiled, teeth looking to me like fangs. His face, as always, almost terrified me. And for one brief moment, I thought that he might rip my head clean off my shoulders, but his lids fell over those sometimes-empty sockets instead.

"Close your eyes, Lilah."

I did, and he kissed me.

It was not a fancy kiss. Not a particularly passionate kiss. But it was good, and it felt real enough. When he had made his point, he kissed my forehead. I kept my eyes closed for a moment longer.

I didn't want to open them.

Flowers

by Meagan Hightower

Come forth once
Again in an ocean of
Purple petal blooms

In Tin

by Megan Langlois

London beside me: nose in a book.
Scotland and **Ireland** nearby: drinks in hand.
Spain on my left: swaying to music's rhythm.
France just behind me: flirting outrageously with all.
Italy not far off: chatting about the sports of the week.
India behind **London**: spices smelling sweet.
China and **Japan** squeezed in between: arguing the business of product demand.
Canada alone on the side: books of healthcare plans stuffed in a bag.
Russia shoved in a corner: sulking and taking offense.
Greece near **Russia**: jovial with laughter.
Africa by **Italy**: child in hand.
Iran standing next to **Spain**: stern in expression
Iraq near **Iran**: tears flowing behind dark colored veils.
And **America** in me: eyes watching tin,
The world *reflected* within.

Running

by Megan Langlois

I hear its **thump, thump**

and I remember with a certain longing.

Wind dancing, dancing

and I remember it tugging at my hair.

Muscles strain, strain

and I remember where they took me.

Blood pumps, pumps

and I remember the rhythm it played.

I remember the joy

and I am filled with a heavy sorrow.

I remember it all

and I know the bones, bones, and pain.

I know it all

and I must be content remembering its

Thump, thump.

From Me to You

by Juanette Williams

Ever so faithful,
Ever so true,
Like a mass murderer;
I'm out to get you!

My overflowing adrenaline,
Speedingly roars,
Like a lion
Possessed with demonic
Forces such as love blues,
Midnight passion,
And much eagerness.

From Me to You

I lay patiently,
Knocking, seeking, and asking;
With a sincere expectation
To come in, to find, to receive
What I've been waiting for.

You are mine,
By name I have summoned you
For some time.

From Me to You

Forget the Title, Remember the Taste

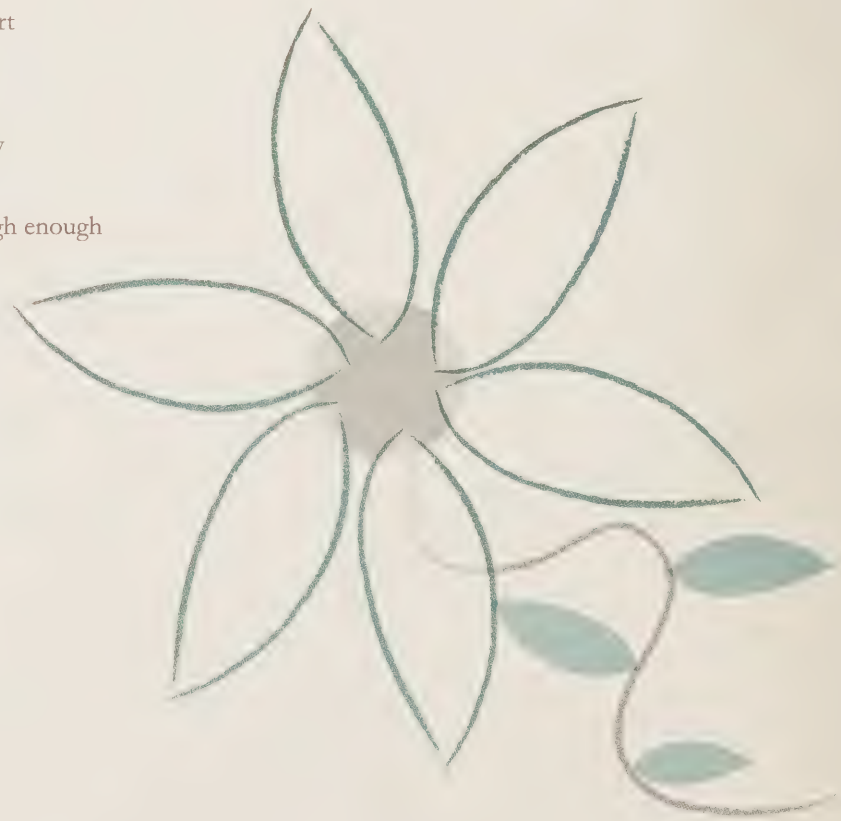
by Melissa Williams

Now the night is blurred, vision slurred and you still seem so clear.
With a hit I'll forget, and with a shot, forgotten.
Bad news, you're here in every spine tingling fear
And the stars resemble your eyes as the cold fills your lies
And I'd watch you die just so I could be the last to see you alive.
The smoke only lights your smile and I'm asking to stay a while
If your melody didn't fit…*goodbye*…

Hear that, baby? The forever turns to maybe, then befriends someday.
Sold my soul to the evil for a rebel and she had me calling
For those three words you've never heard, nor preferred.
As comforting as the opiates are the sunsets, and foolish bets
Leaving regrets expressed before the beginning and end met.
The ladies are as addicting as are the final moments exes come to mind
In the form of O's and my eyes, they close as my heart
Temperature and I are ushered below.

In this wish you are the snow and kisses offering slow
Coats lending warmth in this twenty below.
And the snow drips off your face but I'll never be high enough
To erase this sad trace from our fall from grace.
Let's move not in haste but in a *sensitive* taste.
And I pray, I couldn't be there to break the stare
That follows the touch of your hair.

Fuck, I still care.



Depraved Heart

by Megan Langlois

Innocence shadowed by

Pain

Innocence destroyed by

Isolation

Pure Heart shattered by

Cruelty

Pure Heart blackened by

Betrayal

Bright Soul darkened by

Façades

Bright Soul lost by

Confusion

Death gained by

Ignorance

Death welcomed by

Hopelessness

And all was lost

Sicklickle/ Cyclical

by Jessica Dixon

spring.

Green eyes stem from ruddy red cheeks.
I Am
Awestruck.
Not by your beauty—
(Profound)—
But by thoughts provoked from me
by you.

summer.

Hot lips hold a tongue of molten ice.
I Am
Swooning.
Not by your kiss—
(Forbidden)—
But because of the Garden given me
by you.

autumn.

Shadowed skin clings to sculptured bones.
I Am
Worried.
Not by your love—
(Cherished)—
But when I crawl under the wrong sheets
with you.

winter.

Hollow cheeks painted with sallow blushes.
I Am
Wronged.
Not by your hand—
(Home)—
But why Lazarus won't share his miracle
with you.

Full Moon

by Anna Tyson

At the crack of dawn,
The moon transforms again
Taking with it the darkness of *night*

At day break, I too rise with the sun,
Enduring the warmth of its rays

At night fall, the metamorphosis begins again

The shadows of the fallen sun cover the earth

The pounding heartbeats of the day cease
And all is quiet and still

I can hear it breathing
Like drums to announce a solemn death

Its great paws slowly pound against the earth's cold land

I wonder can it see me?

Strips of the silver *moon* lights a path in the forest

One step can barely be seen by the other

A howl at the moon assures me that it's near

Like drums of war,
My heart beat quickens as I race across the woods

I am quick, but it is faster

Like a thief in the night,
The beast is seen in the distance
Eyes of silver flash in the dark

It enjoys the thrill of the chase, feeding from my fear
And suddenly a halt

I face the creature head on

Mysterious and chilling
Thrilling and untamed

Silver eyes stare back at me
Not those of a beast
But those of a man

"Sinfully Delicious"

by Anna Tyson

She lay on her stomach with her face pressed against the drenched sheets. Her body was sweltering, but yet she shivered. Her back moved like *waves* as the tingle crawled down her spine. Inches from her, he slept ever so calmly and peacefully. She wrapped her finger around his chocolate *curls*. Slowly, he opened his eyes, giving her the same crooked smile that won her over in the first place. His cinnamon skin glistened, reflecting the light of the dimly lit room. His dark, almond eyes seemed to capture the spiritual illumination and strength that the night had brought to her. Both were in a foreign land, whispering a foreign language to each other. His native language was Portuguese, while her thoughts were in English.

However, he whispered to her, "***Qué tal?***"

She searched for the right and most sensual words. "***Rico!***" The two laughed and he lowered her chin to kiss her. He consumed her full lips, the taste of salt and residue of her chocolate lip-gloss cover his tongue.

"***Y eso?***" He asked. His boyish face looked mischievous, but she was lost in the mystical darkness of his eyes.

"***Rico, rico, rico***," she told him. As the two play naked in the humidity, his honey-colored skin meshed with her skin, which was comparable to chocolate, creating a delicious and sweet dessert. This appetizing, luscious, and mouth watering dessert is always a topic of debate. The rules of its consumption are a never-ending discussion among conservative cultures and religious followers. And until this night, she had never dared to try it. "***Wait until you find the one***." "***Wait until you're married***." Although, many who forbade her to try this cream-filled goodness were probably going back for second or third helpings.

For so many years she had waited, just like the good girl she was told to be. Only days away from returning to her native land, knowing that she would probably never see him again… Her mouth wanted to savor it all. And it was good,

sinfully delicious.

To Fly

By Megan Langlois

Flew across Europe

Wings made of glass

Paris, London

I flew across Europe

Wings cracked with a spider's web

Rome, Athens

No way home

Shattered glass wings

A prisoner once more

A body among the shards.

Cold Front

By Robin Story

The weatherman's predicting another **cold front**
but I already know tonight's going to be too cold.

There's a chill seeping in through the cracks in my window
and it's aggravating the ache in my chest.

It used to throb just ever so quietly
and I could find easy ways to numb it.

But these days it seems to pound, an ever constant reminder
of my loneliness and all the things I'm missing.

I'll go to bed bundled up tight
but the chill will still find its way to my toes.

The warmth of another body is vacant,
but that's okay because I've gotten used to wearing socks.

Club Life

By Felicia Hilton

I look, I wonder, I float

The music thumbs the electronic beats
forcing the body to move in compliance

Heartbeats fill the room
fluctuating in essence to the beaming dance floor aura

Filling the conscious mind with sexual desires
and equally cruel thoughts

Smells and aromas of lust, hate, and excitement
tease the senses into oblivion

Swaying and bopping to lustrous songs
to points of utter exhaustion

Until the night comes to an end and the day must begin again

Living Together

By Jessica Dixon

Please pull the shade
and come back to bed;
the sun has not yet bled
over the horizon. Serenade

me back to dreamland,
to the world we rule as King & Queen.
In your gaze, I see the serene
landscape. A single strand

of your hair falls on my face,
and in that moment I know this place
is home.

My eyes grow heavy with sleep.
I see visions of a tome
of our love, one I will always keep.

The Calling of the Hearts Desires

By Felicia Hilton

Say goodbye to the night that brought you the day
Be proud for tomorrow has yet to grace the night
Loath and detest the painful scarlet rays
Create a love affair for the will to fight

The man in the shadows evades the dark
A celestial god walks in the sun
Give him your hand for he shall leave a mark
A glacial figure more than a smart man

The dance of the night is open in near sight
A waltz depresses deep inner desires
Passion fire burns under a massive height
His delightful charm is a lonesome fire

Dear gentlemen wade by the open sea
Mystery man you take away the ache
Poor man you fail to possess the fierce key
Naughty man of night be a hand not a cane

I hate the day for he is not my night
Precious day leave for love is a fright

Midnight Ponderings

By Rachel House

Who is This Person?

This Passport Abuser

Nomadic Creature

So Used to Movement

Restless Settler

Confusing Life with Movie Scripts

Moments of Still Frames

Memories Lodged in Time

Who is This Girl?

Contentment Slurred by Enjoyment

A Hazy Memory

Forgetful Achiever

Intrigued by Wonder

Amazed at Incitement

Education Levels Knowledge

Where has She Gone?

Encompassed by Awe

Traveler with no Compass

Future Designated by Her Past

Unwilling Driver, Idling

A Three Way Stop, A One Way Street

Where to Miss?

Demon's Seal

By: Megan Langlois

Window panes act the seal.

Like a demon's deal.

No escape, No other side.

Hell on the inside.

So holds the *demon's* stain.

Too chained to the panes

To see the open door.

Deeper Waters

By: Megan Langlois

Shadow flickers

infinitely moving

Surrounding me

comforts and deadens

In its depths I deepen

no sound

There is nothing and everything

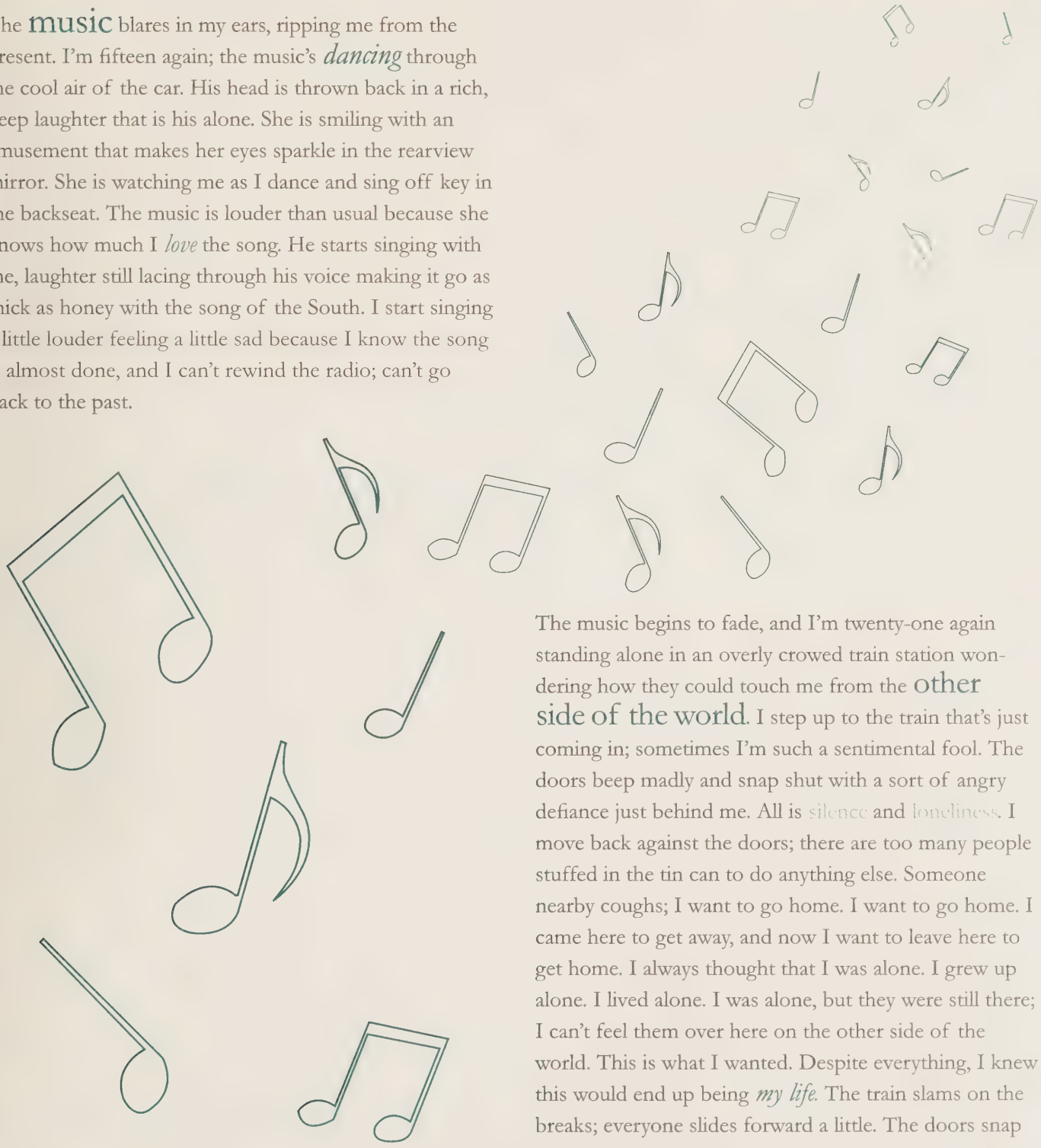
light flickers, flickers

Through the depths

Other Side of the World

By: Megan Langlois

The music blares in my ears, ripping me from the present. I'm fifteen again; the music's *dancing* through the cool air of the car. His head is thrown back in a rich, deep laughter that is his alone. She is smiling with an amusement that makes her eyes sparkle in the rearview mirror. She is watching me as I dance and sing off key in the backseat. The music is louder than usual because she knows how much I *love* the song. He starts singing with me, laughter still lacing through his voice making it go as thick as honey with the song of the South. I start singing a little louder feeling a little sad because I know the song is almost done, and I can't rewind the radio; can't go back to the past.



The music begins to fade, and I'm twenty-one again standing alone in an overly crowed train station wondering how they could touch me from the other side of the world. I step up to the train that's just coming in; sometimes I'm such a sentimental fool. The doors beep madly and snap shut with a sort of angry defiance just behind me. All is silence and loneliness. I move back against the doors; there are too many people stuffed in the tin can to do anything else. Someone nearby coughs; I want to go home. I want to go home. I came here to get away, and now I want to leave here to get home. I always thought that I was alone. I grew up alone. I lived alone. I was alone, but they were still there; I can't feel them over here on the other side of the world. This is what I wanted. Despite everything, I knew this would end up being *my life.* The train slams on the breaks; everyone slides forward a little. The doors snap open with an angry hiss; I wonder how long it will last; how long will the music keep playing for me?

Sleepless Cities

By: Anna Tyson

Sleepless cities
My restless soul
Searching for something to make me whole
Crowded streets
Passing faces
Trouble finding familiar places
Identical days
One after the other
Deciding if I should call my mother
Fear of the dark
Fear of flying
Not sure where it could be hiding
Perhaps it's a song
Or maybe a friend
Searching for something to make me smile again.

Craving More

By: Abry Freeman

One sip of your mind
And I want the whole cup

One bite of your past
And I want the whole plate

One taste of your smile
And I want the whole recipe

I need it all

No more teasing
No more almost

I will *hold* my breath
And turn dark blue

Until I get more

I have a craving for you

Creative Cacophony of Evasive Sleep

Chart the movement of celestial bodies.

Call it an Armillary Sphere.

Call it crazy.

Crazy is so subjective.

Caring is useless.

Cut all ties with my

Connoisseur of pretty things.

Clearly I see things that others don't.

Clarity I can do without.

Can someone please kill the lights?

Creativity lurks in dark places, and we

Combine our efforts in order to

Contemplate meteor showers

Crashing down to us in the night sky.

Candles lighten the room a little so that your

Caresses don't go unnoticed.

Calculating every move, your

Carnivorous habits are rarely noticed

Cobblestone streets

Clutter my mind with a longing for home.

Commentary is not appreciated.

Candid tongues are ignored.

Conquer the territory and crucify

Cadavers, but in the end

Clothes cover nothing.

By Ana Teresa Galizes

Disturbia

Anna Tyson

My *love*, the thief in the night
Without my knowledge, he stole my heart
Masked by only the darkness,
He was quick, but thoughtful
Before I could realize what had occurred
My love, he sucked life from my body like a vampire
Tempted by his kiss, his love, his lips…

How could I refuse
This darkness, disturbia, this world of our own?

He possesses a magic,
One of which I cannot *deny*
Despite how much I try
This magic, It must be dark magic.

The spell that he has placed on me
A slow, disturbing consumption that
Takes total control of my mind
It is not my own
And yet I am the lucky one
To breathe his air, to share his sky

I
Can't
Breathe

I lay motionless in his bed
Drained from his love
And yet in the darkness
I see the moonlight from his eyes
Is he *real?*
Or a figment of my darkest imagination?

Through the Rain

by Yuliana Navarro

It really isn't fair that we have to go through all this pain.
It's not our fault... We fell in love.
We're not the ones to blame.

We're just a couple, a pair, two mere players in a game.
And even though this involves great risks,
Our love for one another, we're willing to sustain.

If we put all effort, all potential, and our
love remains the same,
Then what we lose is nothing
Compared to what we gain.

And as we go through these trials and tribulations,
There's one thing that I have to strain...
No matter what, forever and always...
"We can make it through the rain!"

A Book

by Meagan Hightower

Paper and ink
Encased in
Glossy binding…
Information Is housed
Within. Readers
Come and Go
Over the Years
But the Information
Is the Same.

Surprise! It's Over!

By Jessica Dixon

Day of mist: day of tarnish.
I stand aside and watch the world end.
Silence is the key to abomination.
If I hold still,
Still as a great oak,
Then no one will notice me,
And the world will end without a hitch.
This diabolical plan is all mine.
When I saw the mist this morning,
I decided that the world should end today.
Yesterday was too plain.
Tomorrow will be too interesting.
Today is just right,
Today is the perfect day for nothing.
I white wash the world
Then iron out the wrinkles,
All without moving a muscle.
Eyes closed against the tide of the eraser.
Ears turned away from the drone of dying machines.
Body uninterested in the plight of the billions.
Mind distracted by forgetting everything there ever was.
Today **is the day that the world ends,**
Because I don't want to remember anymore.

A Thought of You

by Sonisa Thapa

Your smile is a soft haze lost beyond these mountains
But *I can never travel back to return to you*
Time seems to be in a hurry to carry me away
Carelessly losing everything I once held

And so I continue this long journey
With your laughter silently fading away
Our last words forgotten
Only a faint mist, echoes of reminiscence
Moments we spent escape through my fingers
I left you trailing behind, I am sorry my friend

I understand I will never see you again
But whether you are slowly vanishing within my darkness
I want you to know that a thought of you still lingers
And so I will continue this long journey
But I will never forget you
R.I.P

Sheets

by Alexandra Olney

He writes a letter every day, and I—
I read them once and hold them to my face,
imagining the air of our rooms,
thinking of the things he does, alone:
driving, cooking, reading, sitting
at an island of a café table
while I—I sleep in an ancient adolescent bed,
curled, hands between thighs,
warding off the cold of missing him.
He writes a letter every day: a gift
in outstretched hand, and I—
I read them once and bundle them in thread.

Who are We?

by Juanette Williams

We are one of a kind, silver nor gold has nothing
on us; Unstoppable, priceless, and yet
bought with a price.
Driven to be the best; with a sound mind, we are
relaxed and ever so ready…
Time is a living cycle, exhaling and inhaling.
Who are We!
Receptive and true,
Design with a destiny, hand crafted and sealed.
Who are We?
Do you know, do you understand, or would you like
for me to tell you once again!

Kathryn's Crash

by Melissa Williams

The Captain always goes down with the ship,
so baby crash into me, and we can go
down together, forgetting forever.

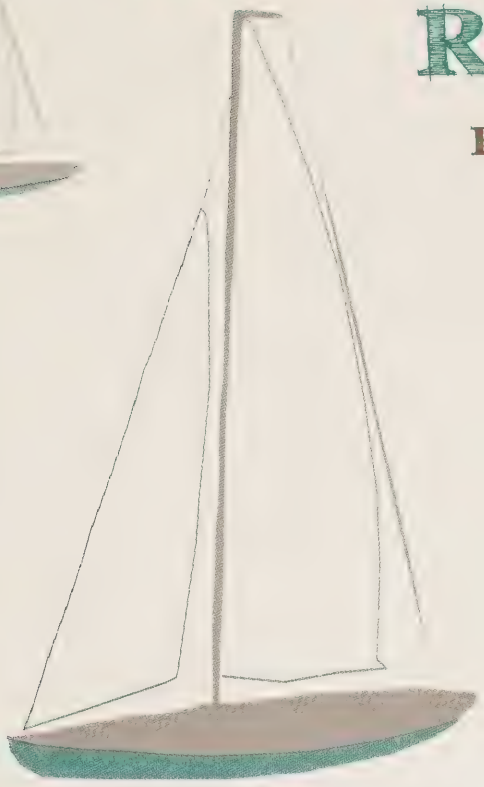
Laugh silently as I use you as you did me.
Knowing the morning is coming
I'll leave you surrendered lost and tender
to the game you once entered.
Hiding my heart to break yours apart.
Hoping your innocence is something you miss
Once deserving of a slower softer kiss
Blissfully unaware *I* took the truth
to motivate the dare and forget
the care I used to wear on
the sleeves of arms now bare.

Honestly, this dishonesty won't feel as good
as the inside of you, my specialty
Oh virgin, I've been with more than a few.
Before you were untrue, you meant more than a notch
So unfamiliar to dream of a scene so serene
to careen is the only way of escaping.
Warm for a moment, I felt you near
Vulnerable to you, fully naked already.

Sugar and spice and everything nice
Fuck her twice before she yields the knife
Little girls are made of the broken pieces
And the promises left behind, love's teases.
Oh sweetie how I'll regret taking you
under these covers made of lies
but not as much as letting you
make me cry…

White Sails, Red Crosses

By Ana Teresa Galizes



Had I found my way to Goa
Where I was draped in silk?
My hands covered in Henna,
Like a bride's at her wedding.

You set sail for the Cape,
And I kept vigil.
But like many others,
I looked to the sea in vain.

Everyday, from my balcony
I looked for a sign of my Navigator.
Till one day, tired of waiting,
I cut my long locks and set sail, too.

With the promise of gold and silver,
And treasures of epic proportions
My crew was ready to go.
Never aware of my one, true purpose.

Our Caravel left its seafaring nation
For uncharted waters.
The white sails bearing red crosses
Were an emblem of home.

I chased the ghost of a man
From port to port
Who chased an empire of pepper
And undiscovered worlds.

I was not tempted by Sirens
Or by a monopoly of tea,
But by compasses, maps, and Astrolabes
That whispered a promise of hope.

In Macao, Nagasaki, and Timor
I found our Colonies
And our language spoken,
But he was always several steps ahead.

In the New World, riches were plenty,
And we were nearly full circle
When at the docks, I spotted
White sails bearing red crosses.

From the deck of that vessel,
A familiar figure mended a mast.
He answered sailors' questions,
And gave orders, too.

And only then did I realize
That after all my searching
I had found my Navigator, at last.
I found him in the land of Vera Cruz.

Mountains in the Sky

By e
g
a
n Langlois

They stream from rivers high
To mountains in the sky
Such splendor resides in them
During dawn and dusk.
Heavenly colors pour into
Such creations in the sky
They alone are free to fly,
From vast oceans to
Ever changing land,
To see what human eyes
Can never behold

Awfully Bad Poetry

By Ariel Wortham

My poetry is awful
And I simply don't know *why.*
Every time I write it
I really want to *cry.*
Well, maybe that's a *lie.*

But to be completely **honest,**
I'm simply not the **best,**
And when you go to read this
Your patience it will **test.**
This poem has no **zest.**

I do not know how long
I've tried to get it *right*
But when it comes right down to it,
I'm not really all that *bright*
Though I try with all my *might.*

The rhythm isn't smooth,
The rhymes really **suck,**
And when it comes to alliteration,
I'm simply out of **luck.**
I'm about as good as a **duck.**

So I will stop right now,
I will go on no *more*
But now you know the truth
My poetry's a *bore.*
And now my head is *sore.*

Mamá, No Llores

By Anna Tyson

(Spanish Original Version)

El ayer se cayó y hoy no tengo nada.
Mamá, no llores por mí.
Las flores sin aroma,
El cielo sin sol—
Todo esto es triste
Pero yo sin él soy una tragedia.
Mamá, te dije *no llores por mí.*
Un niño sin risa,
El mar sin sal,
Mi corazón sin el ritmo—
Esto también es triste,
Pero yo sin él soy una tragedia.
Mamá, no llores por mi.
No llores por mi corazón roto.
Sólo quiero para ti lágrimas de felicidad.
Hoy no tengo nada.
¿Pero quién sabrá mañana?

Mama, Don't Cry for Me

(English Translation)

Yesterday I fell, and today I have nothing.
Mama, don't cry for me.
A flower without a scent,
The sky without a sun—
All of this is sad,
But me without him is the tragedy
Mama, I asked you *not to cry for me.*
A child without laughter,
The sea without salt,
My heart without rhythm—
This too is sad,
But me without him is the tragedy.
Mama, don't cry for me.
Don't cry for my broken heart.
I only want tears of happiness for you.
Today I have nothing.
Who knows what tomorrow will bring?

Women in Wounded Land

By Al-Mounawara Yaya

A **message** to women worldwide.

To the woman in India who cannot get married for her parents do not have the exorbitant means to pay the dowry;
you're worth more than every expensive item on Earth.

To the woman in Pakistan who is about to be burned by her in-laws because she cannot conceive,
do not be ashamed to be a woman.

To the girl in Asia who has an abortion because the child is not a boy,
it might have become the leader that Taiwan needs to get to the next level in development. How sad? Too bad!

To the woman in Africa whose husband claims to love her but is polygamist,
love is what you feel for yourself.

To the woman in the United States who is in an abusive relationship,
you deserve better than that.

To the poor mother or unemployed widow who was prevented from working by her husband,
fortunately, there is hope.

To the women who support women's mistreatment, *you are a woman yourself.*
Get off of the clouds and come back to Earth.

To those who mistreat women and find religious arguments for it,
religion promotes equality and respect for mankind, too.

To the woman who *murders* her abusive partner,
you shouldn't have done that.

This is not a cry for vengeance but a call to **open our eyes wider and act more.**

Why live in fear?
Why not combat fear?

Rethink about it,
think about it,
think about it,

think…

Lost Love

By Anonymous

To

F
A
L
L from a height not high enough to kill,
To trip and drown in your own breath,
To dive heart first into a pool with ~~no~~ water,
Like floating above the Titanic, witnessing the *slaughter.*
Look in to the eyes of a child who lost more than a toy.
Look up at a ~~star~~less midnight city sky.
Neither show love, and now neither do I.
This tightening in my chest transforms to cardiac arrest.
Love kept my heart beating, lungs breathing.
Love kept me dreaming, achieving, and believing.
Hazel eyes open and close to a hazy nightmare.
My daily achievement is just waking up,
And the only things I believed in were God and us.

Not boring words of a broken heart,
But of a piece missing, existing only in lovers' arms.
She lives in my memories now, these many moments
Replaying and repeating through this scratched disk.
Something angelic attempts to press pause for me,
But this faulty camera can not retrace and replace regret
With sunsets and silhouettes and dreams that come true.

A sorrowful song derived from our melody—
I dance alone to the beat.
Slow rhythm refusing to release me, a siren tempting
me to leap into the sea,
A flame that sparked my soul then incinerated the glow.
But these ashes will provide no phoenix for our future.
This fall from grace portrays gravity at its greatest.
Time offers a cure but only eternity seems worthy
To uncripple me on this kryptonite floor.
Till then, my love, I will dance on and on,
Knowing that this lonesome dance floor isn't where our love belongs...

The Silent Goodbye

By Maria Leonor Lopez

"Mi'jo, mañana nos vamos al otro lado," my father tells me after he arrives from his trip to town. Mommy does not agree. He had just visited some of his old friends who had agreed to give him a hand so he can go back to the United States.

He has been with us for six months already and almost every day Mommy tells him to leave. She tells him that we do not have enough to make ends meet and that soon I'll start school and I'll need a uniform and supplies. He tells her that we should all leave, that I'll have a better future there. She says I'm too young and the journey is too dangerous.

It is three o' clock in the morning, and I take in the news. I try to process them with my mind half asleep.

"Is Mommy coming with us?" I asked, after I remembered that she told Aunt Rosa that she would never let me go.

"She has decided to stay with Aunt Rosa. We are going to go alone." He says it in the hypnotizing voice he uses to tell me the stories he learned from Granddad many years ago. I fall asleep again.

Two hours later he wakes me up.

"Come on, Juanito. You need to get ready."

He pulls me up and sits me on the edge of my bed, then takes my black tennis shoes that have the picture of Spiderman on the sides, puts them on me, and ties them. He brought them to me from the US.

He moves diligently. He opens my drawers and picks the items that seem to be in a decent condition.

I step out of the room and head towards my parents' room. Mommy is lying calmly on her bed.

She is wearing a white sleeping gown that has a pattern of pink pastel flowers on the bottom of its sleeves and neck.

I take baby steps toward her. The view of the bed standing vertically in front of me, holding her body like a cradle, is almost magical.

I eventually reach her bed. I kneel down beside her and lean towards her face. I brush my lips tenderly on her pale face. She doesn't move, not even a little.

My father stands at the door and takes baby steps into the room too. He probably has my same vision of Mommy on the bed.

"Daddy, Mommy is not waking up," I tell him when I feel he is close enough to hear me.

He takes two steps towards me and says: "She is probably really tired. Let her rest."

"But she has to say goodbye," I say, almost in a whisper.

He is already holding me tightly by the waist and pulling me away from her.

He says it as he pushes me towards the door where Aunt Rosa is standing. She does not look at me. She gives a devastating glimpse to my mommy and stares at my father with fury. Her eyes are red and challenging.

We hear the front door open without a knock on the door. Two seconds later the figure of Aunt Rosa is standing in front of us.

"Juanito, ve por tu mochila- Juanito, go and pick up your bag. Aunt Rosa and I need to talk."

He says it as he pushes me towards the door where Aunt Rosa is standing. She does not look at me. She gives a devastating glimpse to my mommy and stares at my father with fury. Her eyes are red and challenging.

When I reach the door, I turn and give a last glimpse to Aunt Rosa. She is holding a kitchen knife with her left hand and with her right is padding my head, still fixing her eyes on my father's physical complexion. "Go on mi'jo, listen to your dad," she says.

I step out of the room, but leave the door semi-open.

I stand behind the door and fix my eyes on Aunt Rosa's left hand.

"Ready to go, my Rosita?" my dad asks Aunt Rosa, while he rushes towards her. When he reaches her, he takes her in his arms. Aunt Rosa pushes him away with her right hand, slowly, and introduces the knife into his stomach with her left.

My father looks at her tenderly. I imagine him looking at my mommy and me the same way when he first set eyes on her as a mother and on his first born child, me. He smiles sympathetically and says: "That is why I fell for you, my Rosita. You have always being a strong and decisive woman."

Aunt Rosa pushes the knife deeper into his gut, causing him to fall on the floor with his arms still trying to hold her waist.

"Hijo de puta, Hijo de puta." Aunt Rosa repeats it several times while she stands, motionless. She lets go of the knife and tries to remove my father's essence from her body, brushing off with her hands what she feels is left of him on her body.

I step into the room again without being able to take my eyes off Aunt Rosa's body. She hasn't noticed I'm in the room, so I pull on her skirt three times in order to get her attention. She is not looking at me, but I know she is ready to listen.

"Aunt Rosa, help me to get Mommy up." I plead with her while I keep hold of her skirt. I look at my mommy and Aunt Rosa is merely staring into space. She shifts her eyes slowly to the peaceful body of my mommy.

"I can't, mi'jo. I am dirty and she is so clean." She pauses for a moment, as if reflecting on her own words.

"Go to mommy and kiss her good bye, Juanito. We are leaving shortly. Meanwhile, I'll go and get your bag. It's ready, right?" She asks in a calmer and more practical voice.

I nod and walk towards Mommy.

"Goodbye Mommy" I say. "I truly wish you could come with Aunt Rosa and me. Wake up soon so you can join us. Please wake up..." Tears are rolling off my eyes.

I feel the presence of Aunt Rosa behind me. "It's time Juanito. Let's go"

"She is going to wake up, Aunt Rosa, isn't she? And she's going to join us in el Norte too, right?" I ask desperately.

Aunt Rosa does not answer. She pulls my arm and drags me towards the door. We step over my father's body in the process. We leave a trace of blood stains on our way out.

7 Ways of Looking at a Cherry Blossom

By Jessica Dixon

One.
Spring begins with the cherry blossom.

Two.
The unwillingness to say goodbye.
I hide among the blossoms.

Three.
Prince embraces peasant.
Swirling wind intrudes.
A blossom leaves the tree.

Four.
In the world,
One inspires many.
From the tree,
One inspires all.

Five.
Thin line on the palm of the hand.
Crimson beads of here and now.
Singeing pain at the site flows.
Not the job of the razor
But of a blossom dancing on the air.

Six.
You and I stand hand-in-hand.
You say you love me.
I say the same.
We ask for confirmation.
They've awaited this sign.
The blossoms surround us in eternity.

Seven.
Tears fall onto the blossoms
From my eyes and the sky.
Another glimpse of life beheld,
They melt away in brushstrokes.
All the world weeps as one.
Not in sorrow, not for death—
Joy for beauty.

Mystery

By Juanette Williams

*M*ystery,
Glows in the **dark**…
Light-up the midnight skies…
Comes in the twinkling of an eye…
Never ending, always present and joyous…

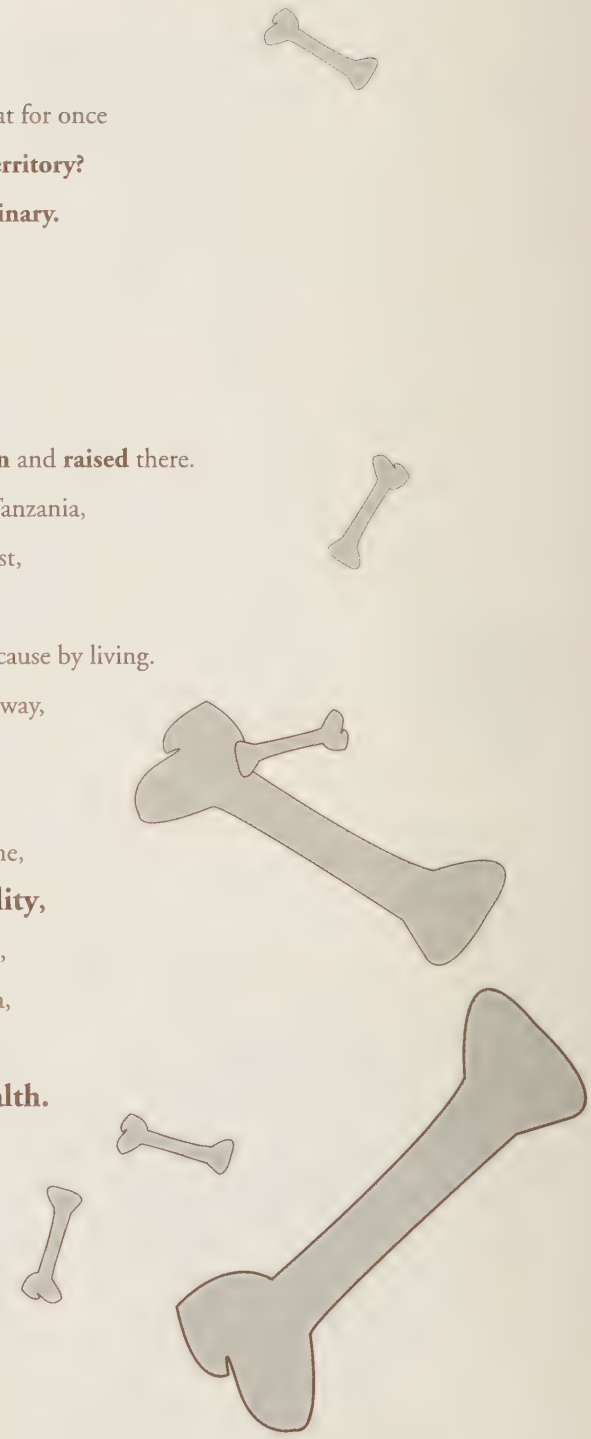
*M*ystery,
Presents the spirit of **curiosity**.
The thought of Mystery
can be **heartbreaking** when not true,
yet worth the wild.

O' Mystery,
I **give**!
I stand still!
Patiently!
For soon Mystery shall **reveal…**
Mystery
O' Mystery

Nostalgia

By Al-Mounawara Yaya

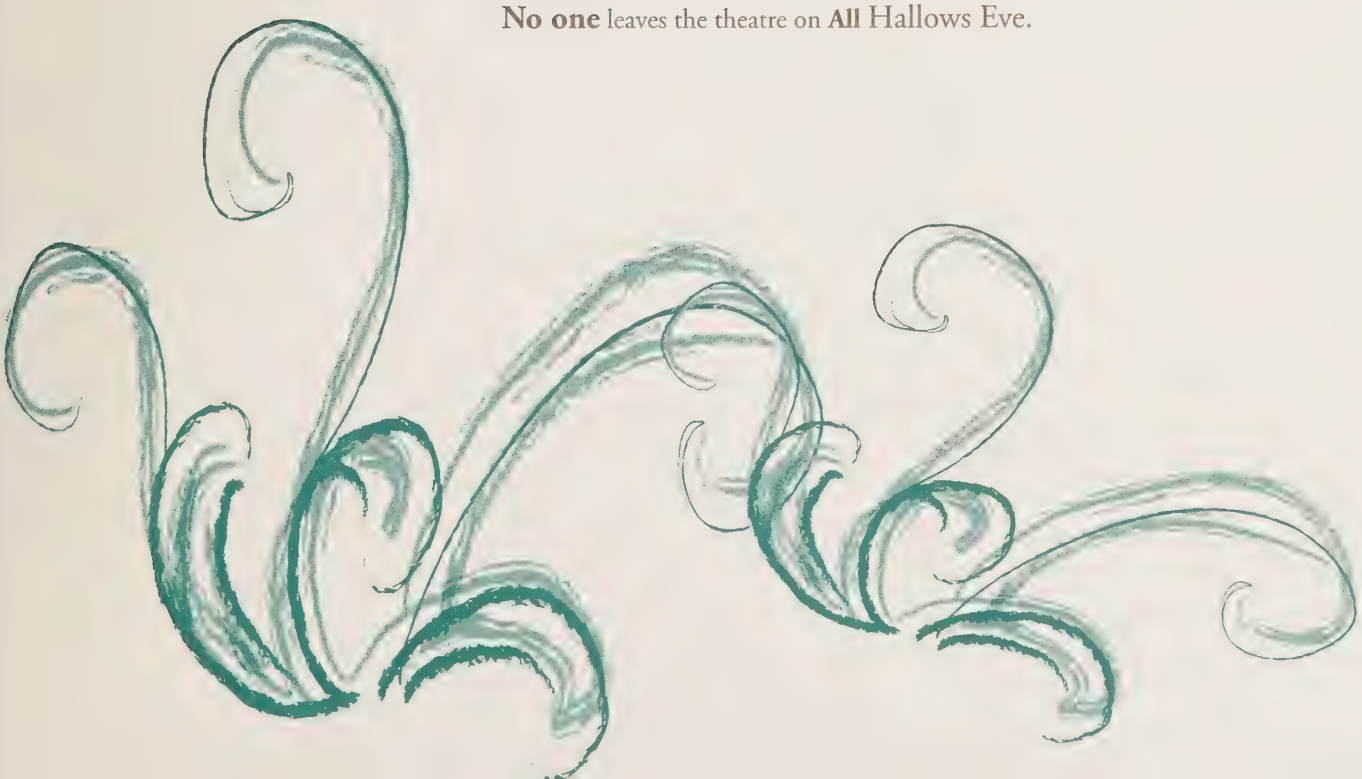
Oh, what a **joy** to know that for once
I will be enjoying the visit of a new **territory?**
Doing something that was not **ordinary.**
But how sad is it to go?
I am **scared to the bones.**
Living in this beautiful place,
Land of my ascendance,
Land that I have never left before, for I was **born** and **raised** there.
I could **hear**, Mont Kilimanjaro in Tanzania,
The elephants in the Ivory Coast,
The Pyramid in Egypt,
Try to warn me of the emptiness that I will cause by living.
I do feel **empty** now that I am away,
Away from you Africa.
Know that I will come back,
Back for your smile and sunshine,
Your unique and warm **hospitality,**
Your magnificent works of art,
Your delightful flora and fauna,
Your delicious meals,
Simply for your **matchless wealth.**



Stage Fright

By Jessica Dixon

Gone **dark**.
Shapeless shadows
Dragging helpless,
Hopeless victims
Across the stage.
Scene change.
Every eye
Becomes intoxicated.
Ghost dance.
Skeletal march.
Widow's waltz
In **smoke**
To sing.
After life.
Before light.
No one leaves the theatre on **All** Hallows Eve.



The Hard Life of an Actor

By Robin Story

I'll fill these walls with **cryptic** codes,
hoping you'll know they're especially for you.
I would love to tell you myself,
but you don't **deserve** to ever hear from me again.
I'm almost disappointed in myself for doing what I did,
but considering how far you'll go
just to **satisfy** that fucked up part of you,
I'm more amused that you tried so hard.
It takes a lot out of you, doesn't it honey?

That **facade** you maintain with such passion
could fool even the most sensible soul.
But you need not forget that I'm **different,**
and I am capable of seeing through it.
I appreciate pretty faces and pretty words,
but I only appreciate them when they're sincere.
And you, my dear boy, are the **least** sincere of them all.

So please get some rest tonight, as
you're going to need all your energy in the morning
if you're going to keep this up.
Though I am wiser than you will ever be,
there will **never** be a shortage of fragile **hearts**
seeking the attention you so selfishly give.
Just beware that you're not the **only** actor in this world...

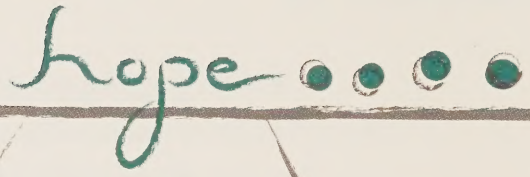
Untitled

By Gay Brinkley

If I question God,
am I **blasphemous?**
If I think about having
sex with my attorney
while we meet about my impending trial,
am I **completely fucked**
or just a healthy 40-something woman
with an active mind
and a more **active** libido?
If I wish the father of my children dead
will bad karma follow me
or is that an oxymoron?
Am I damned to hell because of bad choices,
or am I gentle, forgiving,
and more real than the average **soul?**
If I have no clue how to parent some days,
should I lose my children
in a looming custody battle?
If I once felt like striking my daughter,
will I surely become **abusive?**
If I become dead and buried
because of precancerous cells
and inevitable surgery,
should I go ahead and blow my brains out,
or should I wait and see if my babies are taken away from me legally?
If I don't sleep at night,
should I be angry, blame everyone else,
and live each moment vicariously through another's eyes,
or should I spread my wings and fly?
If I see others direct their anger at me
do I reach out and shut them up myself,
or do I turn the other cheek
and **hope** they are strong enough to move forward?
If I live with goodbyes,
do I not appreciate what I have?
If everyone walks away without a tear in each eye,
does it mean I never loved at all?
If time leaves me behind,
how will I find my way?
If I question
all these questions,
am I fulfilling
some **destiny?**

Untitled

By Gay Brinkley



"I'm
not
knock-
ing on your
door to hurt
you," he told me.
I believed him.
I loved him
wholeheartedly,
regardless of uncertainty,
blind faith leading me.
His misguided words
my beacon.
Gullible.
Naive.
Genuine.
All strengths
and undoubtedly my weakness.
My efforts,
sincere and true,
received with aloofness
and fear.
Desertion.
I pick myself off the floor,
continue on,
dignity intact,
head held high.
Tainted view.
Finally dissipating.
Hope on the horizon
as he
knocks no more.